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The Commonweal

week by week

LESSON IN CIVIL DEFENSE

THE former deputy civil defense director in the nation's capital who spoke in such contemptuous terms of Operation Alert of June 15 was rather a lone voice. Government spokesmen and newspaper editors vied with one another in signalizing what was achieved recently in meeting the mock hydrogen bomb attack on three-score American cities.

What was most widely agreed upon was the success registered in conducting the national government from thirty-one scattered shelters in the vicinity of Washington. The three days in the hills seemed to indicate that this could be done; at the same time the extraordinary isolation it involved was said to have set many officials thinking realistically in terms of now-foreseeable conditions. The exodus and distribution of some fifteen thousand public servants from the city of Washington was a truly impressive feat.

How conclusive, however, was even this major sector of the test? Dispersal of any number of people depends on plenty of advance warning—a factor our radar and other long-range means of detection do not provide. Published details of the government hideout experience are necessarily somewhat sparse, but it would be interesting to know what correlation is planned between such an exodus and the simultaneous dispersal of the local armed forces and the whole civilian population. Would government personnel be able to reach their previously assigned hideouts nearly as readily if a real attack were on the way? And what preparations have been set up in case certain hideouts were rendered inoperative by bombs or fall-out?

In assaying the success of Operation Alert the papers have asserted that this air raid drill brought home to the American people the extent of the danger that exists and aroused widespread desire to cope with it. Possibly a ten-minute surcease from the daily round, and resort to World-War-II-type shelters accomplished this; but in many cities it was simply another desultory air raid drill. There was little to distinguish it from the tepid make-believe of other drills of recent years. If the "precautions" of June 15 created very little sense of real security, neither did they arouse the public to the terrifying potentialities of all-out thermonuclear warfare. By and large the civilian population is as ill-prepared to withstand thermonuclear air raids as before.

In the effort to make plain what would have happened, the papers did play up the total destruction of the target cities and the fifteen million Americans of every age and station who would have been killed or wounded. Defense authorities themselves followed this up by stressing the continuing dangers of radioactive fall-out. It was said that in many instances people who had fled for their lives would not be able safely to return to their homes for a period of six months, to take one example. The possible havoc is truly unimaginable, although Secretary of the Treasury George Humphrey expressed considerable confidence that "we would be able to take it and . . . recover surprisingly rapidly."

AS far as the general public goes, this test adduced little that was new—except in certain cities where extraordinary measures were taken. It does, however, provide an occasion for facing up to the whole issue. Air raid shelters would provide little protection in a city that was a target for a thermonuclear attack; evacuation would supply the only chance of survival. But it is not possible to have a preliminary warning early enough to permit the evacuation of our largest cities. A holocaust would therefore ensue.

Presumably the knowledge that there is no effective civilian defense against the H-bomb led President Eisenhower last fall to declare that as far as viable national policy goes "there is no alternative to peace."

This is a truism which far too many Americans still fail to recognize. Once it is grasped, however,

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the task of the free world becomes clearer. We have no assurance that the Soviet Union, which in its military journals is now beginning to talk in terms of "surprise attack," would refrain from using such weapons. Moreover, Senator Symington and other experts on air power believe that in many ways the USSR is already our superior in the air.

To avoid a major war must therefore be one key point in our policy. Until self-policing agreements can be reached on mutual disarmament and nuclear weapon control, that means keeping armed to the teeth, maintaining the advantages accruing from our forward air bases, continual strengthening of our alliances, our allies and neutral nations, East and West. This is hardly the moment, then, for more economizing on defense or foreign aid expenditures. But this policy also demands as well a willingness to negotiate even "at the summit."

One hope is that reflective consideration of what would have happened here had Operation Alert been an attempt at self-defense against actual thermonuclear raids on sixty American cities will give pause to some of our most vociferous patriots. Could a nation wounded this grievously ever be said to have won a military victory?

There is too much hammering away at the evils of coexistence with the Soviet Union, not enough honest facing of the alternative. In view of the current stage in the development of destructive and defensive weapons, even implicitly to call for war is outright irresponsibility. Operation Alert did put this lesson in tangible terms for those who will face its implications.

NEXT WEEK

ARCHBISHOP ROBERT E. LUCEY writes about the tenth anniversary of the United Nations.

"Sometimes the search for perfection blinds us to the fact that a gradual growth towards perfection in political and economic relations without ever actually reaching it is probably—one may say, certainly—all that is possible. The Genocide Convention, for example, makes it an international crime to destroy a people's national, racial, religious or ethnic character and culture. Why any American should oppose it or why any Catholic anywhere should condemn it is a profound mystery, except that the Genocide Convention might be considered not perfect. Yet why expect perfection in the first place? Why be moved by an argument that something only ninety per cent good, or only seventy-five per cent, is therefore unacceptable? If it is laudable to seek the best, it is also praiseworthy to accept and work for the good, if that is all that can be reached."

EISENHOWER-STEVENSON AGAIN?

IT now seems reasonably certain that Adlai Stevenson is available for the Democratic nomination next year. The word is that Mr. Stevenson has abandoned his 1952 reluctance and is eager to fight an all-out campaign against the Republicans. And he will probably have the chance, for who else, really, do the Democrats have to offer? Most of the other possible candidates have either removed themselves from the race or declared themselves for Stevenson.

The Republican candidate seems equally certain, for whatever may be President Eisenhower's personal reluctance, few believe that he can successfully resist the tremendous pressure his Party will put on him to seek a second term. The prospect, then, is for a second Eisenhower-Stevenson contest next year, with the odds heavily in Mr. Eisenhower's favor at present.

Would such a contest be a mere repeat performance, with variations, of the battle of '52? We do not think so. Too much has happened to both Parties, and to the world, in the past three years. Old issues are dead, and new ones have arisen. New facts must be taken into account.

Under the President's leadership, for example, the Republican Party has cautiously moved left. Though it is still a "conservative" party, it is now "moderately" conservative. In power, it has not attempted to repeal the twentieth century, as some Fair-Dealers feared it might, but has, rather, accepted the social legislation of the Roosevelt-Truman eras as facts of life that even Republicans must learn to live with, even though some Republican appointees have done their best to sabotage social welfare programs. And in the area of foreign policy, the 1952 slogans of "liberation" and "toughness" have been quietly buried. Instead, we have been led into a policy of disengagement abroad and reduced armaments at home. Whatever may be said for this, it is scarcely a formula for that "dynamism" about which we heard so much in 1952.

As things now appear, therefore, Mr. Eisenhower will go before the voters next year as the candidate of prosperity and peace. In this role, one hopes, he will be able to wage a relatively "high level" campaign, one free from the mindless sloganeering and outright demagoguery that marred his efforts

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three years ago. In face of this, what should be the Democrats' line?

Since the Republicans have moved a little to the left, it would seem that the Democrats must move in that direction too. Dead center, after all, is not large enough to hold everyone. Mr. Stevenson, if he is the Democratic candidate, must dramatize the fact that from 1933 until 1952 the work of social justice was merely begun—that large numbers of our citizens are still ill-clothed, ill-housed and ill-fed, and that the government still has an obligation to do something about it. And as for foreign policy, he must point out the danger that the nation will lose the future by default; he must remind the nation that we live in an era of profound social revolution and that our foreign policy, if it is to be successful, must be geared to that.

Great issues should be debated in 1956. We look forward to the prospect that Mr. Eisenhower and Mr. Stevenson will debate them.

PATRIOTISM AND RELIGION

EVERY year at Commencement time a number of orators at Catholic colleges expound on the virtues of patriotism and religion. Sometimes, rather questionable links between the two are made. We read, for example, of speakers who say that to be a "good American" one must be religious; we read of others who say that to be religious one must be a good American. Both propositions seem to us extremely dubious.

We doubt, for example, that "Americanism" has anything essential to do with religion: a good citizen may be a pagan, an agnostic, or an atheist. We also doubt that religion has anything essential to do with "Americanism": a saint may be an anarchist. The most that can be said is that *ordinarily* the good citizen will honor religion and the religious man will honor the State. Ordinarily—and no more. Even a casual reading of history should bring exceptions to mind.

What should be emphasized is that no group has a monopoly on the virtues. Certain secularists try to excommunicate religious men from the company of patriots. (No Catholic can really be a good American, according to Mr. Paul Blanshard.) Certain Catholics, on the other hand, would excommunicate irreligious persons from the ranks of Americanism. (No atheist, they say, can be a "dependable" citizen.) Both dogmatisms confuse orders that are essentially different. Good citizenship carries no religious test, nor does sanctity wear a badge of nationalism. Let us keep distinct things distinct.

WET FIRECRACKER

AS President Eisenhower approaches the Big Four conference in Geneva, is he more free than he would have been two years ago? Is he more free than Harry Truman would have been if he were President in 1955? Anyone who doubts that the answer to these questions is in the affirmative should read the reports on a recent Senate speech by Senator Joseph R. McCarthy (R., Wis.).

In his speech, Senator McCarthy charged that the President is having this country "play the role of straight man for the Soviet Union" by agreeing to attend the top-level meeting in Geneva. The Eisenhower Administration, he charged, "is fashioning the free world's worst defeat since the end of the second world war." All in all, Washington observers called the speech Senator McCarthy's most scathing attack to date upon the Eisenhower Administration. What effect did it have? It did lead to an open clash on the floor of the Senate between Senators Knowland and McCarthy—a development which one Senator described as "a splinter within the Republican splinter." Outside of that, the effect of the speech was, as far as we can see, nil.

Would the results have been substantially different if this speech had been delivered two years ago? We think there is no doubt of the fact. When the McCarthy mood was widespread, a McCarthy speech like this one should have divided the country into two warring factions. Today, as always, Senator McCarthy can say so if he thinks the Administration's foreign policy is "to cooperate in the current Communist peace offensive." But now most Americans seem to have taken the measure of the man and of the terrible problems we face abroad. They have, at least for the time being, turned their backs on the essential negativism of the McCarthy method. Their rejection of extremism and their support of Mr. Eisenhower's moderation combine to put the President in a very good position as he approaches the meeting at the summit.

ORGANIZING OFFICE WORKERS

LABOR'S success in organizing white collar workers has always been limited, for a variety of reasons, and most people are therefore inclined to take lightly any talk of unions for office workers. Recently, however, Walter Reuther had something to say on the subject. Fresh from his triumphs in the auto industry, Mr. Reuther is not a man to be taken lightly.

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One of the first objectives of the combined AFL and CIO, he said, would be an all-out drive to organize the millions of unorganized office workers in the United States—a group he called "the forgotten men and women of modern industry." As labor men know all too well, organizing white collar workers is much easier said than done, but Mr. Reuther apparently means business. "We intend to redeem our pledges to these unorganized workers," he said. "We intend that this unity we have so long sought will be a new beginning for organized labor in America."

The task will not be done overnight; that much is certain. But if the combined AFL-CIO does wage a long-range successful drive among office workers, it would mean that a large and hitherto neglected segment of American workers would win badly needed benefits and protection.

THE PRODIGALS

WHEN the Korean armistice was worked out, thousands of North Koreans and Chinese refused repatriation to their native, Communist-dominated countries. At the same time, twenty-three American PW's refused to return home, expressing their preference for life under Communism; one later died, and another eventually changed his mind. Recently, Radio Peiping announced that three more Americans had asked and received permission to leave China; two of the three want to return to the United States, and the third wants to go to Japan. In addition, the Chinese broadcast hinted strongly that other Americans in the group are also likely to leave China soon. "I may be hung," wrote one of those scheduled to return, "but I'd rather be hung than stay here."

The former PW's who come back are not likely to be hung, we suppose, but they are also unlikely to go scot-free. Some of them are accused of having aided and abetted the Communists while they were prisoners of war in order to gain privileges for themselves. Others are reported to have signed Communist statements, participated in Chinese propaganda broadcasts, and the like. U.S. officials naturally do not like the idea of letting real crimes go unpunished, and military men in particular are interested in reducing such collaboration with the enemy by future PW's. The situation is admittedly complex. But any decision that is made about the returning PW's should take into account the background of the men themselves.

Mature and educated men have betrayed their country for the Communist cause. As was pointed out at the time of their defection, however, most of the former PW's are neither mature nor educated. Two of the group had some college education; of the rest, only three had finished high school. Fourteen came from families broken by death, divorce or separation. At the time of their crucial decision their average age was less than twenty-three. Most of them had gone into the Army very early; before going to Korea, few of the twenty-three had had a chance to develop any strong roots in American life.

These are facts, and to us they seem important. We are not trying to psychologize guilt out of existence, and we realize that the government officials responsible face a tough problem. But under the circumstances, it seems to us that the treatment of the former PW's should be completely free of any spirit of vindictiveness. For real crimes they may have committed, they should be tried. But the circumstances of their actions and their youth and background should enter into the final decision. This, it seems to us, would mean that in these cases justice should be tempered with a strong dash of mercy.

MR. MENON'S VISIT

THE relative calm that now prevails in the Formosa Strait should not deceive us. The situation remains explosive and a policy of nervous wait-and-see is no guarantee against disaster. In this context, the Washington visit of India's Mr. Krishna Menon is a cause for hope that some way out of the impasse may be found.

Mr. Menon is, understandably, not overly popular in Washington. His public views have often been decidedly anti-American and some have pictured him as Prime Minister Nehru's evil genius, the subtle insinuator of a pro-Communist line into Mr. Nehru's neutralist ear. Yet, in the present situation a continuing diplomatic effort must be made, and in this effort India's role is necessarily vital. The fact that Mr. Menon has the confidence of the Red Chinese should make us wary, perhaps, but it should not make us inflexible in our dealings with him.

Quemoy and Matsu are still there: they will not conveniently vanish into the sea, and so we must negotiate their status, whatever be our personal distaste for the business. A solution to the question of Formosa must also be found—but the quest for that can be long-range. What is urgent now is the problem of the offshore islands, and this urgency makes Mr. Menon's Washington visit welcome indeed.

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Asia Looks at the Bomb

"THERE IS A STRONG AND VOCAL OPPOSITION AMONG NON-COMMUNIST ASIANS TO THE POSSIBLE USE OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS"

SHAO SHUAN LENG

IN the current tense situation in the Far East, the United States is confronted with what can only be described as an atomic dilemma. In the face of the huge manpower and massed armies of the Communist bloc, American strategy seems to rely upon nuclear weapons as the chief means to deter Communist aggression and to repel it if it occurs. On the other hand, it is no secret that policy-makers in Washington are seriously concerned with the risks and consequences that will be involved in the use of nuclear weapons, whether they be in the form of mass retaliation against enemy cities or in the form of tactical atomic bombs on military targets.

Many political, military and moral questions can be raised regarding the utilization of nuclear weapons in warfare. Here, however, my main interest is to indicate how such a policy is viewed by the Asian people, to whose freedom the United States offers protection and for whose defense these weapons may be employed. By now it should be clear to everyone that there is a strong and vocal opposition among non-Communist Asians to the possible use of nuclear weapons, even for defensive purposes. This attitude is due to three factors: the general fear of an atomic war; the suspicion of the white man's racialism; and the disapproval of certain aspects of the Far Eastern policy of the United States.

In a speech before a gathering of Asian Socialists last November, Burmese Defense Minister U Ba Swe warned: "In this age of nuclear weapons, there can be only two alternatives for the nations of the world, and they are either peaceful coexistence or total annihilation." This expresses a universal fear that atomic warfare would bring only ruin to civilization and destroy the victor as well as the vanquished. Unless something is done to prevent the use of nuclear weapons, it is felt, doom seems inescapable for the whole world.

Last year, a feeling of new urgency was aroused in Asia when it became known that the H-bomb tests carried out by the United States at Bikini had victimized some Japanese fishermen. From one country to another there moved a wave of emotion, demanding an immediate stop to further tests for fear of the fatal effects of radio-activation on the human organism and its hereditary elements. In their joint communique of May 2, 1954, the five Colombo Powers, India, Pakistan, Burma, Ceylon and Indonesia, urged that "pending an agreement on elimination and prohibition of the Hydrogen bomb and other atomic weapons, no further explosions should take place." A similar appeal was made to all the powers concerned in the recently concluded Asian-African conference which considered that "disarmament and the prohibition of production, experimentation and use of nuclear and thermonuclear weapons of war are imperative to save mankind and civilization from the fear and prospect of wholesale destruction."

In pleading with the great powers to ban nuclear weapons, many Asians have urged the United States to take the initiative. Since the United States has the largest atomic stockpile and is a Christian nation, their reasoning goes, it has the responsibility to lead the way in securing humanity against atomic catastrophe. For instance, C. Rajagopalachari, one of the anti-Communist leaders in India, has repeatedly appealed to the United States to throw all atom and hydrogen bombs into the deep Antarctic and begin a new world free from fear. He calls such an action a challenge to statesmanship and feels that America should have the courage to take the lead.

RACIAL sentiment is a factor which generally influences Asian opinion whenever the question of using nuclear weapons against an Asian country arises. It cannot be emphasized too strongly that among the people in Asia the issue of race is a very touchy subject. They are highly critical of the doctrine of white supremacy and suspect that the West treats them as expendable. To them, the slogan of "Asia for Asians" has more appeal than that of "using Asiatics against Asiatics." In dealing with international problems, therefore, most of the Asian people

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are somewhat influenced, either consciously or unconsciously, by their racial emotions and by such concepts as Asian solidarity.

In the Tokyo War Crimes Tribunal in 1948, for example, Justice Pal of India, differing from the majority judgment, urged acquittal of the accused Japanese leaders on all the charges in the indictment. Was it fair, he argued, to punish the Japanese when the interests of the so-called Western powers in the Eastern Hemisphere were mainly founded on the past success in "transmuting military violence into commercial profit?" And in 1950 when the Chinese Communist "volunteers" forced the American troops to retreat from North Korea, a conservative newspaper in Pakistan expressed its alarm at the Communist success but added that it would be cowardly not to admit that a certain amount of satisfaction was felt in Asia over the fact that for the first time an Asian nation had successfully challenged the power of the leading country in the West.

Because of the depth of their racial sensitiveness, many Asians are emotionally quite opposed to the use of atomic retaliation against any Asian nation, including Communist China. Already the Communists, by distorting historical facts, have successfully spread propaganda in Asia that the United States dropped the atomic bomb on Japan and not on Germany for no other reason than that of racialism. Whether they believe such Communist propaganda or not, most people in Asia seem to resent the fact that all the victims of U.S. A-bombs thus far, either in war or in experiments, have been exclusively Asian. Prime Minister Nehru, commenting on America's H-bomb explosions last year, stated: "It is of great concern to us that Asia and her peoples appear to be always nearer these occurrences and experiments and their fearsome consequences, actual and potential." Consequently, if atomic warfare against Communist China comes, it will undoubtedly arouse bitter criticism of the United States in Asia and provide the Communists with an effective propaganda weapon among half the human race.

CERTAIN other aspects of American policy, it should also be noted, do not meet with approval in Asia. For one thing, the majority of Asian countries are highly critical and apprehensive of the position the United States has taken with reference to Formosa. They do not see any reasons why the United States should plunge herself into a war against Communist China, or possibly into a global war, over the island of Formosa—much less in the defense of Quemoy and Matsu which, in their opinion, are clearly a part of China and of little value to the security of the United States.

Talk of atomic retaliation against China frightens Asians. Even the shift from the theory of "massive retaliation" to that of "measured retaliation" with tactical weapons fails to placate their fear. How, the average Asian asks, can you be so sure that your tactical atomic bomb can utterly destroy Chinese military targets without endangering civilian populations, considering the fact that China's coastal areas are densely populated? And is there any assurance that the Chinese Communists may not retaliate with bigger bombs, thus leading to a total atomic war? To be sure, much as they deplore the use of nuclear weapons, some Asians might go along with the United States if an atomic war is forced upon her by a Communist surprise attack or all-out aggression. But few will tolerate this country's launching an atomic attack on Red China in a war over Formosa.

Knowing this Asian psychology well, the Chinese Communists have mobilized their propaganda machine to exploit it fully to their advantage. They insist that Taiwan (Formosa) is a legitimate part of China

and charge that the American government is trying to use atomic weapons to blackmail China into abandoning her legal claims. Dismaying as this may be to Americans, this type of Communist propaganda does find receptive ears in Asia, particularly in the neutralist countries.

Another aspect of American policy with which Asia finds fault is its general approach to the threat of Communism. Free Asians have heard and read too many tough, almost belligerent talks by American civilian and military leaders. As a result, many of them are unfortunately inclined to think of the United States as military-minded, relying upon war threats and big bombs to meet the challenge of Communism. This approach, they are convinced, is wrong.

According to Asian reasoning, the Communists possess too many effective tactics, such as subversion, infiltration, sabotage, and domestic violence, for them to consider the risky method of armed aggression as anything but the last resort. Thus Asians think the danger of Communism lies not so much in its

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military power as in its ability to exploit popular grievances over poverty, hunger, oppression and injustice. To this menace, freedom and progress, not force and war, offer the best answer.

As has often been pointed out, America's atomic power may deter open aggression by the Communists, but it cannot deter the "people's revolutions" in countries like Indochina or in Malaya. Nuclear weapons may be used against the Soviet or Communist China, but they are of little use in stopping the growth of the Communist movement in India or Indonesia. Machine-guns may be employed to kill Communist soldiers, but they cannot kill Communism as an ideology or as a program.

"Had India, Pakistan, Burma, Ceylon, and Indonesia not been politically independent," says Frank Moraes, a noted Indian journalist, "Nehru and Soekarno, like Ho Chi Minh, might today have been the leaders of liberation movements directed from Moscow and Peking. Millions of their countrymen, the vast majority, would have supported them." In Asian thinking the battle in the struggle against Communism is to be won or lost in the minds of men rather than on battlefields. The surest way to victory is to satisfy the aspirations of the common people and to eliminate the conditions that foster Communism.

ALL these are the main factors that have influenced the majority of free Asians to form a negative attitude toward America's policy of atomic retaliation. As the leader of the free world whose policies need the moral support of free people everywhere, the United States would do well to take into account Asia's feelings on this crucial issue. Consideration of others' views does not, of course, necessarily mean complete acceptance. But policies can often be improved or changed under the stimulus of constructive criticism, and when there exists a distorted impression of a good policy, it should be possible to clarify and defend it more adequately.

It is beyond the scope of this article to discuss in detail what American policy should be in view of Asia's opinion on the use of nuclear weapons. A few observations, however, may be briefly made.

While it is important to make clear U. S. determination to resist aggression whenever and wherever it occurs, unnecessary warlike statements should be avoided. As is proved by past experiences, tough talk often frightens friends more than enemies.

Before the Communist bloc agrees to disarm, the United States certainly cannot do so unilaterally without endangering her own security and that of the free world. Nevertheless, Washington should take the peace initiative away from Moscow and lead the movement to seek both atomic and general disarmament. There is little doubt that President Eisenhower's atoms-for-peace proposal and his recent atom ship project can win more friends and influence more people than the threat of a nuclear warfare. Policies of this type should be stressed to dramatize America's interest in peace and in using atomic energy for the benefit of mankind.

Admittedly, possession by the United States of nuclear weapons has been and still is the effective deterrent to Soviet attack on the free world. We must recognize, however, that the effectiveness of this deterrent is diminishing in proportion to the passage of time; the day will come when the atomic might of this country may be completely neutralized by that of Soviet Russia. It is therefore high time for the American people to make renewed efforts to win friends to their side, with the full realization that men and not bombs are the most effective and lasting deterrent to Communism. To this end, programs like Point Four and the proposed aid to "the arc of free Asia" should receive greater emphasis.

While the United States cannot back down in her commitment to defend Formosa, she should avoid being trapped in a war over Quemoy and the Matsus. Every honorable effort should be made by Washington to seek a peaceful settlement of the Formosa question. If that proves to be of no avail, let the blame for the failure clearly rest with the Communists. Then the defense of Formosa will receive the moral, if not the military support of the entire free world.

Finally, just as the United States should know Asia's attitude toward nuclear weapons, so too it is imperative that free Asians understand the atomic dilemma confronting this country. Whether they like it or not, it is American military power, primarily A-bombs, that has kept them free from Communist domination. Asians should realize that unilateral disarmament on the part of the United States is not only impractical but would be dangerous. In order to play a more constructive role, free people in Asia must consider it their responsibility to offer positive programs aimed at preserving freedom and saving the world from an atomic catastrophe.

Two steps seem to be feasible for Asians to attempt. They can mobilize the overwhelming opinion of the world to press upon the West as well as the Communists for disarmament in both nuclear and conventional weapons with adequate safeguards against possible violations. If this attempt fails, they can organize themselves into a collective security system that will provide a practical alternative to America's atomic power as a deterrent to Communist aggression. To the extent the people of free Asia can work in this direction, the chances for an atomic war will diminish and the cause of peace and freedom will be strengthened.

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The Russian Writer Today

ERIK VON KUEHNELT-LEDDIHN

LITERATURE carries much more political weight in the ideologically pregnant political scene east of the Rhine than in the western domains of Christendom. The religious and political history of the Russian Empire has been more substantially influenced by literature than is the case with a country such as Germany—I cite, as examples, the works of Griboedov and Chernyshevski; Gogol, Dostoevski and Turgenev; Saltykov-Shchedrin and Tolstoi; Gorki and Bunin. Clearly the imaginative works of these writers have affected the Russians more profoundly than the dry and factual writings of their theorists. Bazarov, Shatov, Prince Myshkin, Alexander I and the other heroes of Russian fiction became living symbols, taking on flesh and blood in the imagination of the reader. Yet librarians in the West often frown on readers who borrow "nothing but fiction." Ilya Ehrenburg tells, as a shrewd piece of anti-American propaganda, of an American professor who leaves all reading of novels to his wife.

In Soviet literary circles we frequently find older men, veterans of the Revolution, acting as judges of the newer, more dissolute moral life of the younger and middle-aged writers. The blast of Gladkov against the corrupt life of Surov, Virta and Boloshin, in *Literaturnaya Gazeta* of April 6, 1954, resulted in the exclusion of these writers from the Union of Soviet Writers and from all possibility of publishing their works. Surov had been seen completely drunk; Virta had forced the local *Komsomol* to build a sumptuous villa for his own private use. His excuse was that he wanted to be "near to the people" out in the country.

The drunkenness charge we should not take too seriously: the desire to "escape" on the part of all those writing in the service of an ideology they often despise must be almost irresistible. Even in Nazi Germany it was possible to write about neutral themes, but in the Soviet Union only the bravest can afford not to go out of his way to praise men and ideas he opposes in his heart. Being forced to lie is sometimes more than a man can bear.

The Russian public is deeply moved by such happenings as the exclusion of these three writers, because Russia lives through her books. There is a real hunger for old books, religious books and out-of-print Soviet books; because of this there is an active black market. Yessenin can be had only at exorbitant prices and certain novels of Dostoevski are almost always out of print. Even for third-rate Western literature (Zola, Jules Verne) one has to reach deep into his pocket. Robinson Crusoe is frowned upon—and therefore hard to obtain—because Crusoe is an individualist. At Moscow University students register for a special course in which the professor is known to quote a few passages from a book by Berdyaev. While talking to him after his lectures the students have a chance to peep into this forbidden volume.

THE Soviet novel itself is usually dull and uninteresting. Sholokhov told the Soviet Writers' Congress last December that in recent years there has been "nothing but a gray river of colorless, mediocre literature inundating the book market and the pages of our periodicals." Hence the craving for a more exciting fare—a craving largely unsatisfied by writers called upon to play the pedagogical role of neo-Victorian governesses.

Dyetgiz, the State children's publishing company, has "branched out" into many other fields. To grasp what this means one might imagine what would happen if all American authors were forced to write moralizing Catholic novels for adolescents. Or suppose that Erle Stanley Gardner was told to supply edifying short pieces for a Catholic high school sodality journal and was afraid to touch a glass of whiskey lest he be denounced by Thornton Wilder in a *Saturday Review* published by the FBI.

For a Soviet writer to give or imply a metaphysical explanation of the universe is to run the risk of being accused of "petty bourgeois idealism." The more petty bourgeois Russia becomes, the more frequent and more handy this particular charge. Another fault is "nihilism," a label for a subtle despair over the realities of Soviet life. This crime is also often called "objectivism," which means expressing a sober outlook devoid of any ideological meaning. These are elusive—if not actually contradictory—terms, and they can be used against anyone who puts something on paper. Every writer in Russia has a Damocles'

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sword of "deviationism" hanging directly over his head—and knows it.

The lower one descends the social scale in Soviet Russia the more marked is the spirit of rebellion, disgust and despair. Creative artists, especially writers, serve as an important exception. They are often well paid and unduly coddled; yet they frequently harbor a feeling of hatred toward a government which at once both favors and debases them. The loss of freedom is nowhere felt more keenly than by artists and intellectuals. (It is less felt by religious people, since the catacombs are a legitimate and appropriate place for the Christian.)

Since the government is highly successful in turning this self-hatred against fellow-writers, literary criticism in the Soviet Union is venomous and pitiless beyond belief. Criticism is denunciation: denunciation to the public and, above all, denunciation to

the government. Reviews of individual books and the criticisms of criticisms sometimes fill as much as thirty large pages in the big literary periodicals. *Literaturnaya Gazeta*, the most important and official of these, is published three times a week in a newspaper format.

The divide-and-rule principle which the government applies in the domain of literature works beautifully. The vicious circle of self-hatred, vanity, professional jealousy and the desperate urge to survive (by downing others) creates situations which are unknown in the West. No doubt Theodore Dreiser once struck Sinclair Lewis when the latter won the Nobel Prize, but our authors are not *permanently* attacking one another's books the way they do in the Soviet Union.

The breathing spell immediately after the disappearance of Stalin and Beria was utilized by a number of the literati to write with less restraint; periodicals and publishing houses also loosened up a bit. Leonid Zorin wrote a play, *The Guests*, which was first published in the periodical, *Teatr*, and then performed in a few smaller theaters. This play deals with the differences between generations. The Kirpitchevs, father and son, serve the State, but young Pyotr has no use for the puritanical ways of the old Bolsheviks and has become a corrupt bureaucrat who makes fun of his father's unselfishness: "It is all right for my father to be an idealist," Pyotr cynically remarks. "When he was young it was a real struggle, but today we are living in a different era." His sister, who has remained honest, has an explanation for such decadence. "It can all be summed up by a short word —'*vlast*'." Yet *vlast* in Russian means power as well as government.

At first Zorin's play received high praise; then a hint was given by the Kremlin to the Executive Committee of Soviet Writers that *The Guests* was "inopportune." *Literaturnaya Gazeta* of May 27, 1954, decried its implications: the insinuation that the Pyotr Kirpitchevs are numerous while their enemies are few and discouraged. "This is a complete distortion of 'Soviet Reality'." the journal declared.

On June 1 the Moscow Dramatists met in special session to discuss Zorin's fearful slip. V. Yermilov, the leading orthodox theater critic, asserted that Zorin's play describes something which does not exist: an exclusive Soviet aristocratic caste. Then the actors and dramatists present discussed the sad problem of how a young author could distort Soviet Reality to such an extent, how he dared to describe as a greedy criminal a product of Soviet society, born *after* the Great Revolution.

We also find the implication of a new caste system in Vyera Panova's novel, *Wryemena Goda*. It also occurs in numerous hints and remarks in the Soviet press. In the *Literaturnaya Gazeta* of January 27, 1955, an article, "High Rank," tells of fathers in high governmental positions who treat like mud the teachers of their unruly and lazy children, the spoiled children of a nouveau riche class. The custom of addressing "social inferiors" differently is again in full swing and Soviet plays confirm it. Although this custom still prevails in Holland and Scandinavia, no one in those countries would dream of talking to "inferiors" through a third person as is done in the USSR. ("Tell him that. . . ." "Ask him whether. . . .")

If one carefully reads a play like *Shakaly* by August Yakobson one quickly senses the hierarchization of Soviet society. This play, later adapted into a movie entitled *Silver Dust*, is laid in the American South. The play itself is screamingly funny in its distortions of American life; the juxtaposition of the elegantly—I might almost say aristocratically-mannered—Com-

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munists and fellow-travelers with the boorish and loutish bourgeois is very striking.

One of the characters is a cultivated, elderly American professor who kisses the hands of the ladies and on every possible occasion passes out Stockholm Peace Appeal blanks to be signed on the dotted line. (The kissing of ladies' hands has been revived in the upper strata of Soviet society, especially among artists and actors.) All the anti-Communists in the play, on the other hand, always have their feet on the table, get drunk, are disrespectful of old age and profess grossly "religious" views. One of the most fiendish red-baiters berates a progressive youngster who is unwilling to believe that thirteen is an unlucky number: "How dare you deny the experience of countless generations?" Throughout the play an atheistic aristocracy confronts a wealthy, superstitious proletariat.

IN the years 1953 and 1954 there were several remarkable attempts to break through the barriers which have prevented Soviet writers from mentioning or even alluding to the things which genuinely move, disturb, frighten, or delight the Russian people. Tvardovski, the former editor-in-chief of *Novy Mir*, had the audacity in June, 1953, to publish a poem dealing with the Soviet novel:

> There is the piece of fiction without blemish
> Showing you the new way to lay bricks:
> The backward vice-director, the progressive foreman,
> And how granny develops into a perfect Communist.
> Here you find the Boy and the Girl—both leading workers,
> The dynamo well-installed and providing the current,
> The Party organizer, the hurricane, the accident, the crisis,
> And the Minister visiting the plant . . . and the banquet.
> Everything full of practical hints, everything resembling
> The real or the possible;
> Yet if you put it all together, it becomes so indigestible
> That you want to scream!

No wonder Tvardovski lost his job the following year and was severely criticized, as was his associate, V. Pomyerantsev, who published in *Novy Mir* in December, 1953, a history-making article on "Sincerity in Literature." Pomyerantsev not only ridiculed Tutarinov, the hero of Babayevski's novel, the *Knight of the Golden Star*, but also accused Soviet writers all and sundry "not exactly of serving suckling pig in aspic to the reading public, but at least of keeping the reader from every notion of black bread."

Pomyerantsev's essay attacked all the cowardice and boredom of Soviet fiction and then launched into an imaginary conversation with a "successful writer"—first berating him in magnificent terms and then listening patiently to his cynical if sincere reply. You well know what criticism in the USSR is like, the author retorted; they seek only to pull you down and destroy you morally—unless you have friends in court to help you, or good connections. As to the publishing companies, there are only a few mammoth enterprises, all one-sided, specialized and obsessed by fixed ideas. Hence there is nothing else to do but engage in harmless clichés.

In his snide remarks on Tutarinov, Pomyerantsev merely anticipated the views of another *Novy Mir* contributor, Avramov, who in the April, 1954 issue practically demolished the hero of the *Knight of the Golden Star*, a novel published in 1946 and frequently reprinted. The story deals with a *kolkhoz* in the northern Caucasus which the progressive Tutarinov wants to provide with an electric power station immediately after the war. To achieve this goal the community has to go through endless hardships, and Khokhlakov, a "reactionary," opposes this effort for reasons of comfort and an ill-conceived humanitarianism.

Needless to say, Tutarinov appeared as the hero and Khokhlakov as the villain of this novel; but Avramov ably argued that it was Khokhlakov who represented common sense whereas Tutarinov was a vainglorious careerist. Much as in the days of old when Russians argued for and against Turgenev's Bazarov, the discussion in the USSR now led to a furious dispute between Tutarinovists and Khokhlakovists. But after a short while Avramov, upon orders from on high, was roundly condemned by the Writers Union.

Thus it stands on record that the official ideal of the Soviet Union is the *sluzhvist*, the man who blindly does his duty. Botcharov in his review of a work by Myelezh appears to be at a loss to understand how a German non-Com who is perfectly mindful of duty and service, a *sluzhvist,* as he admits, can also be such a murderous monster. This critic's astonishment comes as a surprise, for we would expect the insensitive model pupil to be something of a monstrosity. Man turned into a machine always is.

Besides religion and crime there is only one more way of asserting one's personality in Russia: love, love between the sexes. Orwell in his *1984* was quite correct in his forecast that the totalitarian state would hold love in suspicion because the feeling is personal and unpredictable. It implies a flight from public

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existence. It creates something the masses cannot share and the government cannot control. In Orwell's terrifying vision of tomorrow's total slavery only people who are *not* in love get permission to marry.

There is already something of this atmosphere in the USSR—but also a powerful opposition, which manifested its explosive power at last December's Writers Congress. Prior to that meeting there had been furious attacks on Ehrenburg's novel, *Melting of the Snows,* which describes how the wife of a high bureaucrat falls in love with another man and deserts her husband. This was rebellion, not against Christian principles, of course, but against the ZAGS (Registry-Office) regulations and the rules and by-laws of the Red Nursery.

When Ehrenburg was asked to defend himself at the Writers Congress, one of the spectators, expecting the usual self-accusation, shouted "Farewell, Ehrenburg!" sure that in a few minutes the author would be morally dead. But instead of repenting Ehrenburg fought back furiously, telling the assembly that *Literaturnaya Gazeta* had received many more letters approving his novel than denouncing it, but that Ryurikov, the editor-in-chief and friend of Simonov, by publishing a one-sided selection, had misled the public.

All the problems, all the difficulties in Soviet life as far as they could be voiced at all, came to the fore at this curious assembly. Surkov, one of Khrushchev's henchmen, opened the Congress with a bristling introductory speech; the critics of Babayevsky's novel —the supporters of Khokhlakov against Tutarinov— were again assailed, denounced and condemned. But all of them had the courage not to retract.

Simonov, another of Khrushchev's appointees, and the secret director of *Literaturnaya Gazeta,* ranted against Ehrenburg and Vyera Panova, whom he accused of "objectivism," but the Ukrainian, Korneitchuk, pleaded for tolerance. "Our authors simply don't dare to write," he admitted quite openly. Ovyetchkin spoke against the rule of small influential cliques. Yashin bravely pointed out that the editions of Mayakovski were now being bowdlerized, and that one of the greatest Soviet poets, Yessenin, once the husband of Isadora Duncan, was never reprinted. The Polish delegate, Iwaszkiewicz, went so far as to mention Dostoevski.

THE Red Nursery seemed to be in what could be styled a full rebellion—in so far as rebellion is possible in a nursery. The most amazing speech came from Sholokhov, another Soviet writer of real talent, and a man who has had to knuckle down again and again, being recently compelled to rewrite *Tikhi Don,* his world famous novel. Yet he found courage in the changed atmosphere. He berated Ehrenburg—in order to avoid the impression of a conspiracy—but then lashed out against the Stalin Prizes, which only fostered mediocrity, denounced *Literaturnaya Gazeta* as the weapon of a mere clique, and finally attacked Simonov, asking him to be resplendent with literary brilliance rather than with medals. Books, he told him, could not be written with the left hand; they have to be born in pain. He got tremendous applause and *Literaturnaya,* after recovering from the shock, dared to print his speech on December 26.

Simonov himself did not want to stand entirely alone, so he put in a weak plea for the representation of love in the novel, citing Fedin's old best seller, *Pyervye radosti.* Fedin, a former nobleman, was guarded in his utterances, but a Miss Papava, who works in the movie industry, came out for more love in books and on the stage. She confessed that the Soviet film was totally devoid of all reality and realism, that it was far below the level of the Italian film, that it consisted of nothing but a thesis and a conclusion, and between these two there was no life.

Olga Bergholz criticized the showy, nouveau-riche luxury in the new Moscow skyscrapers with their golden chandeliers, brocade curtains and fantastic prices. Then she inquired why most contemporary plays are like conferences or sessions with nobody moving from his chair, why love has been banned from poetry and why the naked human body has been eliminated from painting. Vagarshyan, an Armenian delegate, called for youth dramas about exalted and pure love: then they will fill the theaters where they will learn to love as good and nobly born [*sic*] people ought to love." He protested against the Soviet tendency to avoid the theme of relations between parents and children and that of mother love. He charged that the "eternal subjects of life and death, of friendship and jealousy," have been dropped by Soviet writers. Citing Engels, he went on to say that these writers also fail to deal with "healthy sensuality and the passions of the flesh. Are these not mentioned by Homer and Plato, Horace, Juvenal and the Old Testament?" Gamsatov made identical criticisms.

Everyone was curious to know the outcome of all these criticisms. When it came to the elections for the Board of Directors most of the outstanding dissenters were voted in: Vyera Panova, Tvardovski, Ehrenburg, Korneitchuk and Sholokhov. But they did not make the grade for the Secretariat, which remained in the hands of men like Simonov, Fedin and Fadeyev. Surkov became First Secretary. The whole congress was a draw: freedom had been invoked but the trump cards remained securely in the hands of the Khrushchev clique.

(This is the first of two articles on literature and culture in the Soviet Union today.)

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ALL THE SAD YOUNG MEN

AS long as I can remember, older people have been deeply concerned about the youth of America—and often with good reason. There was the "flaming youth" of the 1920's, and what denunciations were hurled at them and their hotcha ways! They were the "lost generation" who set out to find themselves in a sea of bathtub gin. But now it seems they were the last innocents. In retrospect their wickedness seems more silly than sinful. To the present war-hardened crop their excesses sound as quaint as the stylized indiscretions of Restoration comedy.

Then came the youth of the Depression. This was a stark, glum generation given to social protest and pessimism. They joined movements and combined a kind of naive faith in politics with an utter cynicism about America's traditional copy-book maxims. If Clara Bow symbolized the spirit of the generation that preceded them, it was a put-upon Sylvia Sidney or an embittered John Garfield who mirrored their mood.

This generation, too, in its time was despaired of. They were denounced by everyone from Adolf Hitler to America's own prophets of doom. They spent their early years either on the bum or on the dole. It was said that they were thereby corrupted; they had lost their initiative and would never work again. They were whiney and spoiled.

But what happened? They went off to war and proved that they were the equals of the toughest troops in the world. They came home, got married, and then went back to college, bringing babies and seriousness to the campuses of the U.S. In great numbers they moved to the suburbs and provided the leadership for what is now called America's new conservatism. They no longer protest. They no longer march in picket lines. They vote Republican and wish everyone would forget about the passionate petitions they signed in the late Thirties.

They were followed by the generation someone dubbed "GI Junior." During the war these kids earned man-sized salaries. Then their hero-brothers came home and displaced them. They felt keenly, it was said, that there was nothing heroic about them. It was freely predicted that they were going to suffer an explosive inferiority complex. They were doomed to prove themselves by resentful deeds of daring. They had to be watched.

This generation did not have it so easy, after all. They were drafted and sent all over the world to serve as Occupation troops. They had the boring tasks of policing the area their elder brothers had conquered. They took what they wanted all right, but their weapon was not a gun but a chocolate bar.

They came home after it was over, to full employment and early marriage. They made Brooks Brothers the uniform of a nation. They followed their brothers to the suburbs, make more money than their fathers ever did, have more babies than any generation in a long time, and are probably more serious and conscientious than their grandfathers.

They know what they want and they are dogged about getting it. They don't want either revolution or reaction. They want security and anyone who talks to them about security—whether it be economic, social or political—is sure to win their attention.

They might be the dullest generation in a long time and they have the faults of their qualities: the passion for security can lead to a creeping conformism. But if you watch them playing with their babies in the suburbs or poring over the latest issue of *Fortune* you realize that they are a wholesome, amazingly contented group—perhaps a bit too contented.

(Actually there was no Korean War generation. There were only the luckless fellows who got caught. Their age span ranged widely. They included veterans called back, youngsters fresh from high school, and the thirty-year men who did not dream in 1945 that in a short five years they would be back in a shooting war.)

Now we have the new, highly publicized Juvenile Delinquents, a small segment of today's youngsters but a baffling one. They make their predecessors look timid indeed. They are children of violence. They take murder, rape and sadism as lightly as their predecessors took bathtub gin or necking in the back seat. No one seems to know what to do about them.

To undo the corrupting influences visited on this generation, you would have to revoke much of the twentieth century. You would have to cancel out World War II so their fathers would be home with them when they were babies. You would have to demilitarize the third, fourth and fifth decades of this century so they would not have grown up in an age which treasures violence and rewards brutality. For some, you would have to obliterate the racial prejudices that doom them to sub-standard living and personal insecurity. You would have to undo the harm caused by their feeling that they are second-class citizens.

We cannot produce a peace-loving generation in a war-dominated time. We cannot produce the secure child—which is not to say a child with an exaggerated drive toward security, something else again—in an age when fathers are called off to war, lonely mothers are sick with worry for years on end, and everyone has the jitters about whether Armageddon might break out tomorrow. We cannot seal off certain races and nationalities from the great American Opportunity we never tire of glorifying and then expect their children to grow up without bitterness. We cannot, it seems, have it both ways. We cannot have wars and injustice and hope thereby to gain the fruits of peace and justice.

JOHN COGLEY.

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FROM BRITAIN

Labor's Lost Opportunities

Cardiff

EVE-OF-ELECTION meeting, Cardiff North. My colleague, a Bevanite, philosophizes. Conservatives believe in original sin, he says, Socialists in the perfectibility of man, therefore Conservatism is incompatible with Christianity. The audience claps politely. I swallow my theology and switch to the cost of living. They clap a little more convincingly. A Labor Party member in the front row gives us a lead. What about the old age pensioners who have stopped drawing National Assistance now that pensions have gone up? Is it not a mean Tory trick not to let them have the extra pension and keep their National Assistance too? Cries of "shame" from a group of elderly housewives three rows back. The meeting wakes up.

Another meeting. The candidate is winding up his profession of faith. He touches on self-government for the Colonies and aid to underdeveloped areas, and a burst of clapping cuts him short.

Yet another, in a crowded, too hot, rather smelly primary school classroom in a working class district in Cardiff South. The candidate has just said his piece. A young-looking borough councillor takes over and reminisces. The Sheffield City Council (I think it was Sheffield) haled him into the county court before the war because he could not keep up the half a crown a week due for a course for which he had signed on at the Technical College; his father was out of work. Everyone relaxes, there is a pleased and friendly atmosphere, plenty of solidarity.

Solidarity, idealism, and grievances, real or imagined; these are the things which have won elections for Labor in the past, and could have done so again in 1955. For the solidarity is still there, and what strikes one, looking back, after the election, is not the lack of grumbles or ideal causes but the Labor Party's ineffectiveness in drawing attention to them.

Of course, some of the old standbys are no more. Unemployment is gone, except in Northern Ireland, which is outside the normal frame of reference of a British politician. Wages are good. On foreign policy the only clear difference between Labor and Conservative turns out to be that Labor is more anxious to stop H-bomb tests, though not to stop making or keeping H-bombs. Since the use of H-bombs can be justified only to the extent that they are controllable, and the extent to which they are controllable can be judged decisively only from tests, the Labor position is not convincing.

But look at the issues that remain! Grievances, first of all. The farmers have a good one. Fixed prices have been dropped in favor of flexible supports. The taxpayer has done badly out of it and the farmer and consumer not too well. Labor did take this issue up, and had its reward. In the farming constituencies the swing was if anything towards Labor, and one Tory seat was captured.

Labor also scored on the pensioners, though more might have been made of the worries of non-social security pensioners such as teachers and civil servants, many of whom have had a raw deal from Labor and Conservative governments alike. But what about the families with children? Some of the Christian labor movements on the Continent now demand equal standard of living for equal work; that is equal pay for equal work, followed by redistribution through a family allowance scheme on a scale big enough to keep the standard of life of families of all sizes level. That could be a real vote-winner in Britain, where parents and children today are automatically underprivileged in terms of the normal standard of living of their class, whether upper, middle, or working. But Labor has not yet got round to it.

Or what about the industrial workers? Though mass unemployment has gone, there is still a great deal of insecurity in British industry. Might there not have been votes in a government-supported drive for the guaranteed annual wage?

IT is in the more idealistic, longer-range type of issue, however, that Labor's half-heartedness has been most obvious. The Party's election manifesto raised at least three substantial issues of this kind, beginning with that of industrial democracy. The major underdeveloped area of British industrial relations today, and the chief source of strikes and restrictive practices, may be found in human relations at the plant level. Managers and union officials need more training in human relations skills. The

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unions need to attend more to problems of worker or union control in the plant, on which they are well behind, in different ways, both American and Continental practice.

Labor has not missed these needs. The Labor government of 1945-50 backed the foundation of the British Institute of Management and the Administrative Staff College, the creation of management courses in technical colleges throughout the country, and a variety of developments in management research. Management training and (in heavy type) "schemes of industrial democracy" duly appear in the election manifesto for 1955. But did Labor manage to convince the people that it was in earnest about these things, or that they were worth being earnest about? Read the British press and see. All the serious papers remained convinced to the end that Labor, like the Conservatives, in spite of two major strikes on hand or threatening, had nothing serious to say on industrial peace.

On education, Labor has a useful double line of attack. There is an immediate grievance: the gross understaffing and lack of facilities in many schools. There is also a longer-term, more idealistic appeal for greater equality of status and opportunity.

There are at present in Britain two sorts of high status publicly owned secondary schools, the grammar and technical schools, and one of lower status, the secondary modern schools, which take pupils who fail to pass high enough in the "scholarship examination" (what the public calls it, not its official name) at age eleven. Labor proposes to fuse the high and low status systems in one set of "comprehensive" schools and to abolish the 11+ exam. But the double attack has caused confusion in Labor's own ranks. Preoccupied with the comprehensive school, the Party has failed to bring out clearly what it has to say on the more immediate grievance. And the scheme for comprehensive schools has itself never been fully thought out. It came forward in a crude form, drew the solid hostility of grammar school teachers, and became identified in the public mind with a sort of educational barracks, two thousand children at a time, run by a bureaucracy, and made possible by the suppression of many of the most successful existing schools.

Much more could also have been made of the underdeveloped areas. West Indian immigration to Britain in 1955 is in all essential ways similar to Welsh or Scottish immigration to England in the depression around 1935, and people in Britain are very much concerned with it. Labor came forward in the thirties not merely to press the problems of Wales and Scotland but to show exactly what was to be done about them. I remember what an impact this combination of an ideal and a clear practical lead made not only in the depressed areas themselves but in the flourishing Midlands and South. Labor's heart today is still in the right place. But somehow its policy for the underdeveloped countries has never got down to earth in quite the same way.

WHY have so many chances been missed? It is still the same story as in 1951; eyes turned to the past, to preserving and polishing and in a minor way extending the welfare state of 1945-50, instead of turning resolutely to the next set of tasks.

A great many dead horses were flogged in the election. No doubt the Tories are the rich man's party, in the sense that rich men do not usually vote for any other; but the difference between Tory and Labor on taxation and similar matters is now marginal, hardly enough to swing an election. I dare say also that there is some sort of a case to be made for nationalizing Imperial Chemical Industries and renationalizing steel, though Labor candidates in the steel and chemical districts seem to have had to spend a good deal of time explaining it away. But suppose I.C.I. *were* nationalized; where would the Government find a first class manager, familiar with the running of a nationalized industry, to take charge of it?

Then there are the irrelevancies. Quite a number of the issues in Labor's manifesto, though by no means dead, do not have the sort of life in them that stirs the voters at a general election. The need to insist on cleaner food in the shops? Fair enough. One of our big Cardiff stores installed the other day an up-to-date food department, with everything covered, wrapped, refrigerated, to be handled with tongs. But it takes more than a refrigerator and tongs to upset the immemorial customs of Wales. A little time went by, and my wife brought home a fishcake with mold on it. It made a good election story, and we used it. But you do not yet, thank God, win elections in Britain with a moldy fishcake.

And yet I do not feel too depressed about these missed chances. Though I cannot prove it, something in my bones tells me that the turning point is at hand. The lesson of this election is that a Party of Movement, as apart from a Party of Order, can never afford to stand still or look backwards for long. It is also that the materials for a more forward-looking and election-winning policy are there for the picking up, including quite a few other issues besides those mentioned here. And this time I do not think the double lesson will be lost. By the next election, four years or so hence, Labor should be moving forward again, though it may even then be too early for the Party to be traveling again in top gear.

MICHAEL P. FOGARTY.

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THE STAGE

THE MUSICAL TEMPER

IN this season of musical excellence, "Damn Yankees" (*at the 46th Street Theater*) has still a richness and pungency of stage life that cannot currently be bested. I do not wish to expose this supremely exhilarating occasion to the severities of criticism: it is not so much an experience as a sensation, and like all sensations, offers little to the imagination. As the specimen of a sophisticated theatrical genre, "Damn Yankees" neither alters an established pattern ("Oklahoma") nor refines its subject with musical wit ("Love Life" and "Wonderful Town") nor makes out of its fond humors a new and delicate image of art ("The Boy Friend"). Once we have said of it *efficiency* and *zest*, we have said, perhaps, everything.

Yet these virtues must command their own honor: one wonders, indeed, if they are not decisive marks of what is best in the American personality. Let me note, while on the subject, that I had the curious experience of seeing within several days both "Damn Yankees" and the City Center revival of the celebrated "South Pacific." The latter, a careful remounting, full of easy sentimental pleasures, had chiefly a corrective value: it dissolved whatever vague phantasies one may have entertained about the relation of this work to the world of art. And at the remove of a decade, we can see now how it charts with a faultless accuracy the areas of life and death-in-life of so much of the national sensibility: the natural springs of vivacity and exuberance, the stony wastes of pseudo-intelligence and impertinent sentiment.

"Damn Yankees", on the contrary, handles its rather cluttered faustian fable with great tact and discretion: under George Abbot's direction, it is stripped of everything superficial and indolent: committed to speed and volume and a bracing assault on the senses. True, I wondered once or twice just what event these notably violent Dionysian rites were meant to celebrate—perhaps the ascendancy of Gwen Verdon to an absolute pitch of disciplined madness—yet the vital and visible excitement of "Damn Yankees" is not something I would wish to denigrate.

MISS Nancy Walker springs full-armed from the ashes of "Phoenix 55" (*at the Phoenix*) and Pallas Athena never had it so good. Someone has sought to place the lady in a Lucite satiric frame—statistics of middle class folly from *Fortune* are the meat on which the evening feeds—yet she will have none of it: infallibly she presses a sturdy finger *just there,* and the whole thing goes down in a terrible clamor of spindrift and debris. Not, however, Miss Walker: ruined yet immutable, the Ozymandias of Second Avenue, she stands as a perpetual rebuke to the faint of heart. How describe the bizarre and solitary charm of her comic art? Perhaps that brilliant *bel esprit* of English criticism, Mr. Kenneth Tynan, opens an approach when he writes of that other *enfant horrible* in the same line, Miss Hermione Gingold: "behind all her hastily assumed but beautifully draped femininity is a gloating maleness, a massive and unbreakable virility. In her bottom drawer, so to speak, there is a large bottle of rye; under the *politesse* and the urbanity lies the questing beast of the high Renaissance, wholehearted and irresistible." Miss Walker suggests much of this: much, too, of that splendid disdain for the puny world of fact and logic shared by ladies so dissimilar as Miss Lillie and Miss Bankhead—the one's cool and lissome hauteur, the other's caged and ravening contempt. Yet Miss Walker's special beauty is that she remains so purely local, that she keeps, as it were, a hot dog and a Baby Ruth in *her* bottom drawer. For me, she will always be the perfect spiritual barometer of the Gowanus Canal and points south, the foremost moralist of doing it unto others before they do it unto you, or—as in her present incarnation—the heroic student who made the grade at Hunter College, biology major, devoted mother of 27, whose advice to the women of America is: "Girls, major in English."

ARISE and go, now, to "Seventh Heaven" (*at the ANTA Playhouse*), that remote eyrie where Diane forever stirs her *pot-au-feu*, waiting for Lochinvar to come riding out of the far sewers. But hold fast! The Marshall Plan has palpably altered Mr. Austin Strong's faded fantasy. There's a dash of domestic sherry in the stew; the kitchen curtains part languidly to disclose a milky way redesigned by M. Marcel Vertes; "I hear a thousand bluebirds sing," Diane observes, in the musical style familiar to all somnolent patrons of the midnight supper-clubs. But soon she is hearing pots and clatter and the big-bow-wow ('that remarkable fellow' is home!) and so it's down from seventh heaven (six . . . five . . . four . . .) and out into a Montmartre of pimps and panders and snapping garters (*watch out!*) which seems a logical outpost of Mr. Cole Porter's cherished *ville de Paris*. There are wars and rumors of wars, nightmare ballets, can-cans and tin cans . . . and washing over it all, the vast benignity of Mr. Victor Young's caramelized score. "The French arrange these things better," some fabled lady is known to have observed in her distress, and myself—swathed in the gold *lamé* cocoons of "Seventh Heaven", oppressed by

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these cold and opulent facilities which are slowly doing the professional theater to death—I could but concur: Madam, you said it.

NOW to swab the decks of "Ankles Aweigh" (*at the Mark Hellinger*), awash in barnacles and bilgewater: on our contemporary stage, as hoary and singular a relic of the past as would be the *Monitor* or the *Merrimac* in the Brooklyn Navy Yard. Formidably, its great rusty battle guns go into action; fragile threads of Prince Albert smoke drift sadly through the air. At intermission, a shore policeman sternly patrolled the gangways, quelling mutiny and incivil disturbance. Hastily, happily, I made off through a porthole, did a little sailor's hornpipe of relief, and once again found Broadway—all the way home—calm sea and prosperous voyage.

RICHARD HAYES.

THE SCREEN

VENETIAN GLASS; EGYPTIAN TOMB

WHATEVER you may think of "Summertime" as a story, you've got to admit it's one of the most beautifully photographed movies ever made—so beautiful in fact that it might have been sponsored by the Venice Chamber of Commerce. Cameraman Jack Hildyard glides along canals and wanders through Piazza San Marco and even back alleys with loving care. And the camera (aided by excellent Eastman Color) sees the wonders of Venice with the same fresh enthusiasm of tourist Katherine Hepburn, from Akron, Ohio. Miss Hepburn's flitting from one joy to another is at times rather breathless and hectic—because this no-longer-young American secretary she portrays so well is looking for something. Almost frantically, under the spell of lush Venice, she hopes to find the miracle of love.

David Lean merits laurels for his direction of "Summertime;" but in writing the script, with H. E. Bates, from Arthur Laurents' play, "The Time of the Cuckoo," he has curiously neglected the secondary characters, and one wonders why Producer Ilya Lopert bothered to get actors like Isa Miranda, Darren McGavin, Andre Morell and Jeremy Spenser for roles that are only bits. Gaitano Audiero is excellent as the Italian youngster who somehow understands the American spinster's panicky loneliness and serves as her guide and guardian throughout the city. And Rossano Brazzi is properly handsome and romantic as the married man who serves first as an escort and then as a lover. Although the movie has the original play's casual attitude toward morals, the role of the lover has been changed by eliminating the gigolo aspect.

The film concentrates on Venice and Miss Hepburn —and both show off to advantage, even though Katie wears clothes that are a little too slick, a little too carefully designed. She plays the role more hysterically and more tearfully than did Shirley Booth on the stage but she has portrayed with heartbreaking perfection the loneliness of a middle-aged traveler longing for companionship.

AUDIENCES not worn out by a Hepburn panting amidst the grandeurs of Venice can go back some five thousand years to the glories of Egypt in "Land of the Pharaohs." This elaborate spectacle, much of which was handsomely filmed in Egypt (in CinemaScope and WarnerColor), really will wear out all but the most hardy as it shows, in a seemingly stone-by-stone fashion, the building of a great pyramid for the reigning Pharaoh who wishes to insure his immortality in a thief-proof tomb. Like most historical spectacles this one is jammed with thousands of extras (probably more than Pharaoh himself had in his day) portraying downtrodden slaves, victorious armies, scantily-clad girls doing seductive dances and just ordinary Egyptian citizens who huzzah at the right time whenever Pharaoh makes a speech.

In its international cast of leading players who carry on the main story (written in a flamboyant literary style by William Faulkner, Harry Kurnitz and Harold Jack Bloom), the men somehow come through better than the women, especially Jack Hawkins, who plays the obsessed and mighty Pharaoh as if he were both king and god; Alexis Minotis as the thoughtful high priest; James Robertson Justice as a conquered enemy who also happens to be a good architect; and Dewey Martin as the architect's muscular son who learns the secret of the tomb. Among the gals, Kerima is somewhat slighted as Pharaoh's number one Wife, so Joan Collins as Princess Nellifer from Cyprus works her charms overtime and stops at nothing, not even murder, to become First Lady and finally widow of Pharaoh who gets his tomb done just in time.

Producer-director Howard Hawks turns from the complicated plot every now and then to give us some overwhelming mob scenes with magnificent processions or with sweating slaves pulling a couple of those three million stones (average weight, five thousand pounds) that make up the pyramid. The mechanism for sealing up the tomb is fascinating, but by the picture's end I was so tired from building the pyramid, I hardly had the energy to put the Pharaoh in it.

PHILIP T. HARTUNG.

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COMMUNICATIONS

"THE CHURCH IN ARGENTINA"

Louvain, Belgium.

TO the Editors: I think the points you made in the editorial, "The Church in Argentina" [May 20] are very well taken. Today there is a great deal of unjust dealing in the world based on beliefs or on race or color. In these circumstances the important question is not: Are the people who are suffering deserving of a martyr's status?; but: Is Injustice being done?

We shall very rarely find a martyr or an oppressed person who is totally blameless or who will be absolved of all blame by everyone. I am thinking of the early Christian martyrs and the young woman who bit off her tongue and spat it in the face of the Roman judge. Such cases caused the fathers to nod their heads and go Tsk, Tsk. But she was honored as a martyr all the same.

It is generally agreed that the Christians in the Roman empire, the Jews in medieval Europe, the Catholics of Elizabethan England were persecuted. But in no case were all the oppressed in question blameless. Of course, the degree of their fault or culpability should be investigated. But such investigations will never uncover a fault that justifies civil punishment or social stigma dealt out on the basis of race or belief. For a true liberal only an overt act which gravely threatens the common good can be a cause for punishment and then each case must be dealt with individually.

Today many oppressed persons are victims of their "defenders" and that is generally because their defenders are not interested in justice but in some idea of their own. Still it would be a grave mistake to drop the cause of a Negro who has been denied the guarantees of a free trial because the *Daily Worker* espoused his cause, or to overlook the religious persecution going on behind the Iron Curtain simply because we disagree with the liberation policy of those who—in good faith or in bad faith, and who are we to judge?—talk most about that persecution.

In the circumstances, the *Christian Century* seems to have adopted a sort of reverse indifference-by-association. Because a great number of people and organizations with whom they generally disagree are excited about the plight of the Catholics in Argentina they refuse to get excited. And they justify their indifference by the fact that "liberal opinion cannot foresee much to hope for from victory for either antagonist." In other words, they are waiting on a "deserving martyr." This line of thought is curiously like that of those people who only give to the "deserving poor."

It reminds one of the lines of R. H. Tawney describing the economic results of the Reformation: "That the greatest of evils is idleness, that the poor are the victims, not of circumstances, but of their own idle, irregular, and wicked courses, that the truest charity is not to enervate them by relief, but to so reform their characters that relief may be unnecessary —such doctrines turned severity from a sin into a duty with the assurance that, if indulged, it would perpetuate the suffering it sought to allay."

Let us by no means reserve our protests against injustice until we find a case of some "deserving oppressed." For in that case we shall never protest.

(*The Rev.*) THOMAS H. CLANCY, S.J.

"BELIEF AND THE WRITER"

London, England

TO the Editors: One of the main points that I wished to make in "Belief and the Writer" [May 13] was that though religious belief is theoretically an advantage to the writer, it may in practice prove destructive of imaginative writing. In my opinion, it is downright dishonest, and a disservice to religion, to pretend that all truth is on one side and all error on the other, and to refuse any merits to writers with whose philosophy we disagree. I think that a good deal of Miss Nott's book is wrong-headed, but it is an able book from which much can be learnt.

Miss Jessey's evident touchiness ["Communications," June 10] shows the reluctance of Catholics to face these facts, and the obstinacy with which they cling to the view that the true Church must necessarily produce the best novelists. I did not criticize Mauriac, Bernanos and Greene in detail because I was primarily concerned with two recent contributions to the debate on literature and belief, and because I had already written about them at some length in an article on the religious novel which was published in The Commonweal in the fall of 1951. It is not enough for Miss Jessey to descend to abusive terms like "queasy" and "absurdities," or simply to contradict my estimate of the writers in question; the burden of proof is on her.

I am entirely unrepentant about the expression "amateur theologians." When I used it, however, I was thinking of Eliot's prose and not his poetry. Surely a glance at the essay on Lancelot Andrewes and similar pieces is sufficient to show the justification for the expression?

I am equally unrepentant about "lack of charity." When a novel by a Catholic begins, as *The End of the Affair* does, with the words: "This is a record

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of hate far more than of love," I can only conclude that there is something badly wrong with the writer and the book. Hate, as I have said before in these pages, is one of the most destructive passions known to erring human nature. It can only have a narrowing and inhibiting effect on works inspired by it. Conversely, charity is a literary as well as a theological virtue. I find no "complicity" in Chaucer; I find a warm and tolerant humanity which gives his work a richness and generosity which are strangely lacking in the works of the hate-ridden contemporary religious novelist.

If we do not criticize those writers who to Miss Jessey appear to be among "our American giants of realistic literature" for their lack of charity, it is presumably because they cannot be expected to know any better, and because their work has still graver faults. Compared with Zola, they seem to me to be decidedly small-sized giants, and I had hoped that my comments on the Frenchman would dispose of the main weaknesses which are to be found in all exponents of realistic or naturalistic literature.

Miss Jessey is shirking the issue when she accuses me of criticising Mauriac and Greene because they are "contemporary." The criticisms that I made of them can be, and have been, made of nineteenth-century novelists like Barbey d'Aurevilly and Huysmans. I criticized Mauriac and Greene because in some at least of their novels their view of life seems to me to be false to the point of being rigged. I hold no brief for edifying novels and I am the first to resent the intrusion of pious busybodies into the field of literature, but it is a common illusion to imagine that the truth and depth of a novelist's view of life are somehow proportionate to its blackness.

When Miss Jessey tells us that Bernanos, Lewis and Greene are among the great writers of the twentieth century and are apparently to be preferred to Proust and Lawrence, I am reminded of a letter that Ezra Pound wrote to his mother. "I am deeply pained," he said "to learn that you prefer Marie Corelli to Stendhal, but I can not help it."

MARTIN TURNELL.

FRENCH POLICY IN INDOCHINA

Foyer Sacerdotal
5, Rue Henri IV
Lyons, France

TO the Editors: This letter is probably quite useless. . . "none so blind as those. . ." but it will at any rate unburden my conscience, for I don't feel I have a right to remain silent before your comments on Indochina. They are so biased and so extremely unfair to France. As a French reader of The Commonweal—which I appreciate and admire when it keeps out of French politics, for on *that* subject your information and judgments are decidedly one-sided and marked by open antipathy and more or less voluntary misunderstanding—I must protest and say how deeply it hurts.

To me, the American attitude in French "colonial" problems is very simply "get out of there that I may get in." After so many past blunders and tragic errors in American diplomacy—Yalta and the like—we would appreciate a little less self-confidence.

If we had won at Dienbienphu, we would have been heroes. We were defeated. "Woe to the vanquished". . . they are easy to tramp upon . . . and that from so-called "friends." A French saying goes: "Protect me, O God, from my friends. I'll take care of my enemies." You really don't realize how your anti-French attitude is helping Communists over here. They have but to quote the American press.

The French puppet, Bao Dai, is believed by many of us to be not a "self-imposed" but an "American-imposed" exile . . . and Diem may be incorrupt but certainly tragically in need of USA dollars, which are, of course, the "traditional means of exerting pressure." And we cannot help wondering whether the North African situation would be as difficult if American companies were just a little less interested in oil prospects there. . . .

M. PONCET.

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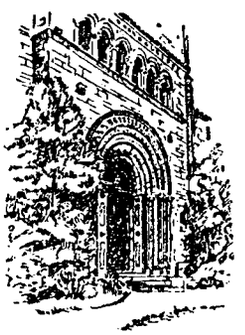

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The Mystery of the Ordinary

APOLLINAIRE. By Marcel Adéma. Translated by Denise Folliot. Grove. $3.75.

By WALLACE FOWLIE

FOR some time before its publication in Paris, in 1952, this critical biography had been promised to the readers and admirers of Apollinaire. They were well aware of the fervor and the meticulous care with which M. Adéma had been collecting the documentation and verifying the historical facts which now form the substance of his book. The presentation of this material is clear, orderly, compact. It will form the basis of all future investigation and critical evaluation of Apollinaire. For as well as providing the soundest biography of Apollinaire yet to appear, it offers a history of the intellectual and artistic movements of the first two decades of the century in Paris. And, without being literary criticism, it prepares the way for a reading of the poet's work.

Apollinaire's lyricism is discontinuous and disjointed. It reflects a seeming ambiguity, but its deepest mystery is precisely in the rare success he creates out of his use of the discontinuous. All great poetry has at least a fundamental subterranean continuity. In his surface discontinuity, Apollinaire has gone very far in avoiding all the temptations of eloquence, and in attaining to a unity which is not purely verbal.

The miracle of his poetry is the number of word surprises it contains, the abrupt appearances and disappearances of emotions and images. The unity of the poem is the never-broken but infinitely fragile and subtle thread of poetic pleasure felt by the poet in all the varied manifestations of his experience. All the myths are in his verses, in close company with pure inventions. He calls upon his immediate knowledge of cities and ports, of unscrupulous urchins and popular songs, in order to speak in his tone of prophet and discoverer. His universe is one of chance and naïveté, of a certain childlike candor which the surrealists will later try to reconstruct. He is the first to use a facile exoticism which today is found in American films and jazz.

Apollinaire is first a poet of regret, of delicate nostalgia, and then, in a very mysterious way, he is the poet of resurrection and exaltation. His memory of the dead makes them into constant presences. *Vendémiaire,* the long poem which ends *Alcools,* is a striking evocation of Paris and of all the myths of poetic preservation, of Orpheus and of Icarus who tried to possess the world. The wine of the universe brought contentment to "oceans animals plants destinies and singing stars." The poem does contain accents of sorrow and Apollinaire's familiar reference to the sadness of children with their salt tears that taste of the ocean, but it is at the same time a poem on hope and one of the most stirring of the century.

Adéma's study is particularly valuable in showing how Apollinaire's appearance, at the beginning of the twentieth century, coincided with many new aesthetic preoccupations to which the poet brought his own inventiveness and speculative inquiry. His work joined with that of Max Jacob, Picasso, Braque, Derain, Matisse, in a series of fantasies and works of art which have gone far in shaping modern sensitivity. A farcical festive air presided over many of the modes of art which were given the names of cubism, fauvism, Negro art, cosmopolitanism, erotology. Apollinaire himself was responsible for the term surrealism. He literally became a prophet in his support of aesthetic innovations which were to become the accepted forms of the future. His articles on painting place him second only to Beaudelaire among the aestheticians of modern France.

In many ways Apollinaire's lesson comes from Rimbaud's which it completes. Poetry is the act whereby that which is essentially foreign to formal language passes into formal language. Surrealism, with the examples of Rimbaud and Apollinaire, was to recognize that the real domain of the poet is just outside what is called the world of reason. Apollinaire taught, by the example of his work, that the poetic act is the creative act in its fullest purity. Whatever is named by the poet has something ineffable about it, and his function is precisely to explain that, to study what refuses to be cast into explicit language. In this way, poetry is able to restore to language something of its primitive mystery and origins.

Poetry like Apollinaire's does not try to fathom the supernatural or the miraculous, but simply to state the incomprehensibleness of the ordinary and the commonplace. Every human expression Apollinaire saw became sphinx-like for him, and every word he overheard resembled a sibyl's utterance. His language has a baptismal gravity about it. Nascent language it would seem to be, rediscovering its virginity, as the poet, performing his earliest role of demiurge, calls the world to be born again by naming it.

Love and Praise

THE FAMILY OF MAN. Prologue by Carl Sandburg. Introduction by Edward Steichen. Published for The Museum of Modern Art by the Maco Magazine Corporation. $1.

By JOHN STANLEY

FOR several months last winter and spring the second floor of the Museum of Modern Art in New York was occupied by a photographic exhibition created by Edward Steichen. But it was not really a photographic exhibition; its *raison d'être* was not to show the techniques or history of photography, nor to praise the photographers, professional and amateur, living and dead; its *raison d'être* was the praise and appreciation of the human family in the silencing variety of its conditions—and the promo-

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tion of love. It came off. It was done with great imagination, begetting power and beauty, in order to warm and encourage this chilled and orphaned generation.

Now this drama, this poem, this song has been turned into a book which is much less dramatic than what appeared at the Museum, but is still touching, stirring. These pictures may not be able to communicate with some because of their particular soul-climate: their language —picture language—is lyrical, an impossible form for many today. But even here, through the lyricism, there is enough laughter and astringency and ashes to make an appeal sufficiently broad and deep to communicate with many.

In his prologue, Carl Sandburg writes: "People! flung wide and far, born into toil, struggle, blood and dreams, among lovers, eaters, drinkers, workers, fighters, players, gamblers. Here are iron workers, bridgemen, musicians, sandhogs, miners, builders of huts and skyscrapers, jungle hunters, landlords and the landless, the loved and the unloved, the lonely and the abandoned, the brutal and the compassionate—one big family hugging close to the ball of Earth for its life and being."

Many of the people we see here are children: they are working and playing and dreaming and fighting and fearing and, wonderful to a child of this set-up, watching their fathers at work—spearing an antelope, for example. There is something of Bach's "Sleepers Awake" about it.

But not everywhere: The *haute monde* meeting in Paris exchanging proud greetings; some Irishmen watching a cockfight—not pretty; the lynched and bleeding negro—no swelling triumph here; some Nazis herding Jews. "Humanity is outraged in me. We must not dissimulate nor try to forget this indignation which is one of the most passionate forms of love"; this caption was written by George Sand in the last century.

Toward the end of the collection Sophocles' question is asked: "Who is the slayer, who the victim? Speak"—and we see a slain G. I. in a shell hole, face down, the shirt off his back, and we wonder why we should be so devastated because ours is a generation that has been weaned on such shots.

Perhaps it is because we have been so deeply touched just a moment before by a group of pictures entitled, "Behold the dreamer cometh." One of these is a picture of Welsh miners coming up out of the pits, faces all black, save 'round the mouth and the eyes, like clowns' make-up, like a Rouault; there is one man especially; he fills the picture and he fills the show; he is the show. He seems to lift us up with his strength and his hope.

Throughout the collection there are the pictures of children playing. But, they've left out the proper caption:

All shall be well,
And all shall be well,
And all shall be well.
And thou shalt see thyself
That all manner of thing shall be well.

Which can only be an echo of:

This day shalt thou be with Me in Paradise.

A Novel from Japan

SOME PREFER NETTLES. By Junichiro Tanizaki. Translated by Edward G. Seidensticker. Knopf. $3.

By NORA MAGID

IT is scarcely surprising that the work of Japan's foremost contemporary novelist reflects the tug-of-war between the old and the new, the East and the West. What is curious, however, is that *Some Prefer Nettles* was written almost thirty years ago. With its casual references to lunches and lipsticks and cabs and phone calls, it has about it a peculiarly American and particularly post-war flavor that contrasts somewhat disconcertingly with the exotic details of its oriental backdrop.

When Tanizaki was once reproached for what appeared to be an inadequate explanation for the actions of a character, he protested "But why should I discuss his psychology? Can't the reader guess from what I've already told him?" Yet for all this stated indifference to conscious interpreting, Tanizaki is certainly a psychological novelist. *Some Prefer Nettles* is as neatly motivated as the most orthodoxly Freudian study in current American fiction.

The inability of Kaname, the protagonist, to act, his immaturity and his self-indulgence, his need for "a woman to be either a goddess or a plaything"—these are all carefully attributed in the course of an expository flashback to an incident in early childhood, recollected in tranquility by the hearing of an old melody. His wife, on the other hand, caught in the cultural rather than the personal conflict—"she [is] not the sort to go through old routines for their own sake"—hovers between emancipation and recurring timidity. And for her as for Kaname, the result is paralysis of the will.

Unable to live together, they are unable to part: "A separation is always sad. Regardless of who is involved, there is a certain sadness in the mere fact of a separation and . . . nothing would ever come of their waiting arm-in-arm for the perfect moment." Having made their decision intellectually, they have considerable trouble finding the courage to carry through.

With his permission she embarks on an affair, a trial second marriage conducted in accordance with the six regulations laid down by Kaname. The other man is discussed, but he never actually appears. The mechanism of reportage by messenger, of having the action transacted offstage in the manner of classical Greek tragedy, gives the novel its odd dream-like quality. Its principals live suspended, waiting for the psychological moment which of course never comes.

The cast includes the inevitable small child, who sensing the breach in the family relationship chooses to close his eyes to the reality of it. He plays his role as required. He is in many ways the most human indi-

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vidual in the book, the only one who seems to undergo suffering that is not self-consciously melodramatic. The precipitating character is the cousin, a kind of *deus ex machina* who finally sets the action in motion from the outside. There are, in addition, the old-world father of the wife, and his young mistress, an ornamental doll of a creature who comes for Kaname to represent the "eternal woman as Japanese tradition had her." The only Western characters, denizens of a fashionable brothel, are resolutely weak and immoral.

Artistically, the novel is well-constructed. Nothing is mentioned in the beginning which does not have relevance later. The symbolism, involving the parallels between the puppets of the traditional Japanese theatre and the human puppets of the domestic conflict, is complex and colorful. And the charm of style is considerable, the contemplative quality of the prose being heightened by the ambiguity of the conclusion.

HEAVEN WAS NOT ENOUGH. By Constance O'Hara. Lippincott. $3.95.

HERE is a new kind of Philadelphia story, which is more convincing as the autobiography of an impassioned and courageous woman than as an account of a religious faith lost and regained. Constance O'Hara has borne up bravely under such misfortunes as loss of wealth and security, recurring desperate illness, loneliness and the continual frustration of an intense artistic ambition.

It is difficult to put one's finger on what occasioned her loss of faith. Was it the surface dreariness she found in Eastern Seaboard Catholicism, or did it have more to do with the beckoning a-religious glitter of Broadway, where for some years she had visions of writing a successful play? And was it an impending critical operation and/or the presence of a simple priest, who enabled her to realize that the sacraments and the Mass are efficacious in themselves, that led to her return to the faith of her early childhood?

Perhaps her painstaking account can be read more enjoyably as a series of frank and chatty reminiscences than anything else. Miss O'Hara presents a number of distinctly personal impressions of such disparate figures as Brock Pemberton, Cardinal Dougherty, Clare Boothe Luce, Agnes Repplier, Frances Starr and a myriad of others. Some readers may like her life story best as a detailed and loving family portrait. It is rather baffling the way *Heaven Was Not Enough* defies classification.

E. S. S.

REVIEWERS

Wallace Fowlie is the author of several studies of modern French literature.

John Stanley contributes frequently to The Commonweal.

Nora Magid is on the editorial staff of the *Reporter*.

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Applying Our Viewpoint

The dissemination of a point of view is the purpose of The Commonweal's existence, and we have attempted to describe our approach in these pages in recent weeks. It may be still more illuminating to examine this viewpoint in the concrete — through articles and editorials of the past fifteen weeks.

The titles of lead editorials during this period tell much of The Commonweal's current interests. Here are a few recent lead editorial titles: The Guaranteed Wage, Catholics and the Movies, The Fears of Francois Mauriac, The Challenge of Abundance, America's Record in the Far East, Federal Aid to School Children, The Wall is Color, Bandung and Formosa.

Leading articles, while hardly representing this magazine's point of view as fully as the editorial pages, throw considerable light on our current interests and our approach to issues of the day. In recent weeks these include: "The Children of Poverty," by Eileen Fantino; "Tito's Turn to the East," by Gunnar D. Kumlien; "Belief and the Writer," by Martin Turnell; "The Morality of Nuclear War," by F. H. Drinkwater; "The Sin of Slums," by John Stanley.

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